

UMS to develop satellite broadband for Sabah remote schools

BP 11.3.2019 2

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KOTA KINABALU: In Malaysia, new learning applications are emerging as Internet technologies are used in novel ways for a wide range of educational purposes.

This growing dependence upon the Internet suggests that Internet broadband should be universally available as a utility: an essential tool for participation, even for

the school children in the remote areas.

Unfortunately, some schools still do not have satisfactory broadband access, a problem likely to seriously affect those living remotely.

This phenomenon has significantly enlarged the digital divide gap between those children in the remote areas and those who have strong access to the Internet. In short, residents inhabiting

remote areas have and will continue to suffer the most.

For this reason, given the fact that satellite broadband technology has some fundamental advantages relevant to those remote schools, UMS will embark upon a cost-effective formulation of satellite broadband implementation research project.

The primary aim of the research project is to reduce the digital divide gap between those

who have the Internet broadband access and those who are not while the primary beneficiaries of the proposed project are schoolchildren, teachers and parents.

Satellite broadband technologies are chosen due to its limited down times, immediate accessibility, signal stability and ubiquitousness.

A team of wireless system implementation experts from UMS

Labuan campus will look after the three-year research project. Associate Prof D. Syed Nasirin who came back to Sabah in 2011 under the TalentCorp Returning Program will spearhead the initiative.

He said with the latest development in satellite broadband technologies, his team should be able to help those in the remote areas to enjoy the same privileges of those in the Internet

luxury areas.

The proposed research project will also open up some novel avenues for multidisciplinary research that has a technical and social thread, bringing interested parties in the state and abroad that could make investment related decisions, associated with satellite broadband-based teaching and learning deliveries for the schoolchildren in the remote areas.